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# ROBERT E. LEE

Centennial Celebration of His Birth Held Under the  
Auspices of the University of South Carolina  
on the Nineteenth Day of January, 1907

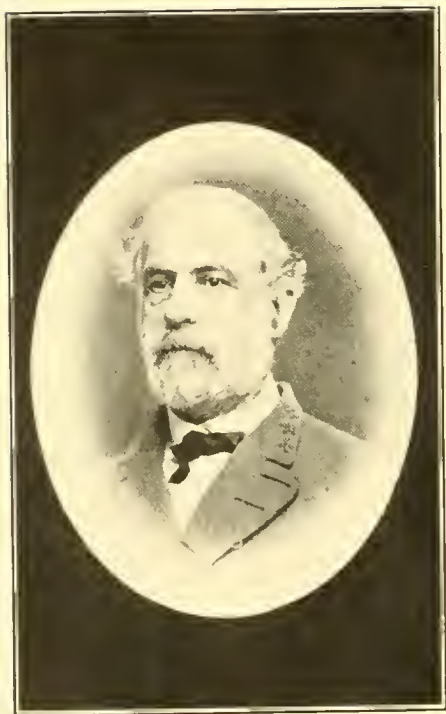






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PRESENTED TO MRS. JOYNES BY MRS. LEE, AS  
THE BEST LIKENESS OF THE GENERAL.



ROBERT E. LEE

Centennial Celebration

OF

His Birth

Held Under the Auspices

OF THE

University of South Carolina

ON

the Nineteenth Day of January

1907

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Prof. Fred. Bamcroft

No 107

(Extracts from the Minutes of the Faculty, Oct. 19, 1906.)

“Moved, That the centenary of Lee’s birth be celebrated by the University, and that Prof. Joynes be requested to deliver before the Faculty, students and citizens of Columbia an address on the life and character of General Lee. Carried.”

(From Minutes, Oct. 30, 1906.)

“The Committee appointed to recommend a programme for the celebration of the Centennial of the birth of Gen. R. E. Lee by the Faculty and student body of the University made the following report \* \* \*

“That Prof. E. S. Joynes has consented to deliver an address on General Lee as a civilian, with special reference to his service as an educator.

“That Maj. Henry E. Young, Judge Advocate General, one of the survivors of General Lee’s staff, be requested to deliver an address on the military career of General Lee.”

(From Journal of the House of Representatives, Jan. 9, 1907.)

On motion of Representative Porter A. McMaster:

*Be it Resolved*, That the use of the Hall of the House of Representatives be extended to the Faculty of the University of South Carolina on the evening of January 19th inst., for public services commemorative of the centenary of the birth of Gen. Robert E. Lee.

## PROGRAMME

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Music by University Glee Club

Prayer, by the Rev. W. P. Witsell

Music

Address, "Lee, the Soldier,"  
by Major Henry Edward Young, of General Lee's Staff

Music

Address, "Lee, the College President,"  
by Dr. Edward S. Joynes, formerly of General Lee's Faculty

Music

Presentation of medal offered by Wade Hampton Chapter,  
U. D. C., to Mr. Eugene Blake for best essay on: "Was  
Secession a Constitutional Right prior to 1861?" by Professor  
Yates Snowden

Music









PRESENTED CHRISTMAS, 1867, BY MRS. LEE TO  
WALKER W. JOYNES; THEN FIVE  
YEARS OLD.

## MAJOR YOUNG'S ADDRESS

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Mr. President, and professors of the University of South Carolina: Let me in the first place thank you, and thank you very sincerely for the honor you have conferred on me in giving me the opportunity of doing myself honor by showing my appreciation of and admiration for the great soldier and man—"the greatest of all modern leaders," and "the most perfect man"—under whom I had the honor of serving personally during the late war. It is needless to say how greatly I value and cherish the memory of my almost daily association with him during the later years of the war.

There are two men with whom in life I have associated intimately and who, though very different in some respects, always impressed me as great men—the greatest I have been privileged to associate with. And yet how different their fates. The one sinking slowly from the ken of men and now within a generation nearly forgotten—the other growing greater day by day—a world hero—Mr. James L. Petigru and Gen. Robert E. Lee. Both were absolutely fearless, both absolutely upright, both absolutely truthful, both devoted to duty, both exercising during life a wide influence. Both ready to help in distress. To whom the poor and needy and weak never appealed in vain; both with intellects that placed them in their several spheres far above all their contemporaries. And yet, before the generation that knew him has passed away, I have been asked in a body of lawyers, when I mentioned Petigru as the highest type of the lawyer I had ever had the privilege of knowing, who he was, when he lived, and what he had done. He lived and worked and toiled faithfully for that jealous mistress the law, and already his great reputation is seen to have been written on the seashore of time and is rapidly washing away.

With Lee, on the contrary, the great reputation graven on the monuments more eternal than brass are but graven deeper and deeper by time. And whatever in the future may happen to the

South, whether it produces statesmen again, known to the whole world—without whose name the world's history cannot be written—and who shall join in the building up of this mightiest empire the world has ever known—or be, as at present, the mere fly on the chariot shaft; its name and history as identified with Lee and his glorious Army of Northern Virginia will be engraved deeply on those same tablets of brass and will not sink to oblivion. But it is time that I turn to the duty you have so kindly assigned to me as one of the staff of General Lee.

To sketch even the outline of General Lee's military career till his life, begun by Colonel Marshall and yet to be completed, is given to the world, laying open more than what mere official records can show, will necessarily be unsatisfactory.

Of course it is easy to sketch his career from West Point, through the Mexican war, to the opening of the great Civil war. The history of those days has been fully written, and no doubt finally written; but from that time on no full history, sanctioned and approved by him, or those naturally acquainted with his views, as, for instance, Colonel Taylor, perhaps his most intimate staff officer during the war, has been written. That by Colonel Long, his staff officer, fills the void only in part—it is so brief. The campaign of West Virginia is not now recognized as the absolute failure it was considered in 1862, and the clamor of the South Carolina papers when the "mud-digger" was given command over the coast of South Carolina, Georgia, etc., against him, and the demand that a brigadier general of this State should have the command, sounds now as the mere madness of the passing hour; fortunately it was then treated as the madness of the ignorant, and was without influence.

While it is true that the defense of the seacoast of Georgia and South Carolina as planned by General Lee remained substantially unchanged during the four years of the war, and was successfully maintained, yet the most interesting part of Lee's career, and that most known to the world, which, from no mean soldier (Lord Wolseley), has won for him the well-earned praise of being not only the "greatest soldier of his age," but also of "the most perfect man I ever met," dates from his taking command of the Army of Northern Virginia—great praise, certainly, when we recall that the man thus placed above his compeers was the unsuccessful

Lee compared with the unsuccessful Sydney Johnson, Joe Johnston, "Stonewall" Jackson, etc., the successful Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, McPherson, etc., of this country, and the successful von Moltke and Skobelev, etc., of Europe. Von Moltke, too, we should recall, places General Lee above Wellington.

Lord Wolseley wrote thus just after Lee's death: Forty years later, in his personal memoirs, when time had matured his judgment, Lord Wolseley styles himself: "A close student of war all my (his) life, and especially of this Confederate war, and with a full knowledge of the battles fought during its progress," repeats his judgment that General Lee was "the greatest of all modern leaders," and compares his campaign of 1862 with that of Napoleon's of 1796. Speaking of his visit to General Lee, he says: "I have taken no special trouble to remember all he said to me then (1862) and during subsequent conversations, and yet it is still fresh in my recollection. But it is natural that it should be so, for he was the ablest general, and to me seemed the greatest man I ever conversed with; and yet I have had the privilege of meeting von Moltke and Prince Bismarck, and at least on one occasion had a very long and intensely interesting conversation with the latter. General Lee was one of the few men who ever seriously impressed and awed me with their natural and their inherent greatness. Forty years have come and gone since our meeting, and yet the majesty of his manly bearing, the genial winning grace, the sweetness of his smile and the impressive dignity of his old-fashioned style of address, come back to me amongst the most cherished of my recollections. His greatness made me humble, and I never felt my own individual insignificance more keenly than I did in his presence. His was indeed a beautiful character, and of him it might truthfully be written: 'In righteousness he did judge and make war'."

Nor does Lord Wolseley in these opinions stand alone. His judgment is that of such military writers and critics as Chesney, Lawler, and of the higher press, Northern as well as foreign.

Says Lord Wolseley again: "I desire to make known to the reader not only the renowned soldier, whom I believe to have been the greatest of his age, but to give some insight into the character of one whom I have always considered the most perfect man I ever met."

It would, therefore, be a mere vain repetition to repeat praises made by those so competent to judge and whose opinions will weigh.

\* \* \* \* \*

It will, therefore, be far more profitable and suitable to this occasion to note an apparent change of opinion which some of the more recent writers seem to take, and the effort to elevate one of Lee's subordinates above him; passing over the omissions, for instance, of General Jackson and giving him the credit due really to General Lee. Is this well founded? General Jackson has had the good fortune of having his life written by several devoted friends—two clergymen, members of his staff—more apt to be partisans than cool judges—and Colonel Henderson, even, seems to be guided by Mrs. Jackson.

General Lee's life has not yet been written by such, except the brief life suggested rather than written by General Long. So the world has General Jackson's side of the case, while the other is wanting. The battles around Richmond were brilliant successes for General Lee, and no one disputes that he planned them; yet they were not as complete as they should have been, and would have been, if General Jackson had not delayed at Ashland, and again at White Oak Swamp. General Jackson had been sent for by General Lee before he opened the battles, and brought to Richmond from the valley, and fully informed of the campaign planned. The initial move hinged upon Jackson. With his wing of the army he should have passed Ashland and been at Slash Church practically on the 25th of June, 1862, and then attacked McClellan on the flank, but he had not then passed Ashland, and did not attack McClellan till the afternoon of the 26th, thus occasioning the check and useless heavy loss at Beaver Dam; the enemy retired from the latter place as soon as Jackson reached his flank. So also the next day at White Oak Swamp. By his delay there he failed to support the attack of Longstreet and Hill at Frazier's farm, and thus "McClellan only escaped destruction through the non-execution of Lee's orders." Colonel Henderson and Captain Battine would have us believe that these were errors of General Lee, and not of General Jackson; in Lee's failing to give Jackson precise orders.



General Longstreet thus states the matter: "When he (Lee) set out on his first campaign (Chickahominy) with the army, the key of the campaign was intrusted to General Jackson, who named the hour for the opening and failed to meet his own appointment. At the time he appointed, A. P. Hill's, D. H. Hill's, and Longstreet's commands were in position waiting (Beaver Dam, etc.). About eight hours after his time was up, he deliberately marched past the engagement and went into camp, a mile or more behind the hot battle. He remained in his camp next morning, and permitted the enemy, dislodged of his position of the day before, to march by him to a strong position at Gaines's Mill. When his column reached that position, his leading division (D. H. Hill's) engaged the enemy's right without orders. He called the division off and put his command in position to intercept the enemy's retreat towards the Pamunkey, from which he was afterwards called to his part in the general engagement. The next day he had the cavalry and part of his infantry in search of the enemy's next move. At my headquarters were two clever young engineers who were sent to find what the enemy was about; they were the first to report the enemy's retreat towards James River. Orders were given for Jackson to follow on the direct line of retreat, also Magruder and Huger. My command was ordered around through the outskirts of Richmond, by the Darbytown Road, to interpose between McClellan's army and the James River, about twenty miles; the other troops marching by routes of about nine miles. We were in position on the evening of the 29th June, and stood in front of the enemy all of the 30th, fighting a severe battle in the afternoon. Magruder and Huger got up after night, and Jackson on the morning of the 1st. After the battle of the 1st, Jackson, Magruder and Huger were ordered in direct pursuit along the route of retreat, my command by the longer route of Nance's Store. Jackson's column and mine met on the evening of the 3rd near Westover, the enemy's new position."

Naturally this may be tinged somewhat by Longstreet's bitterness under the criticisms of himself after Gettysburg; still Longstreet was not one to misrepresent facts.

Again, of this White Oak Swamp delay, Colonel Allan, Jackson's own chief of ordnance and his devoted friend, says:

"Only the column under Longstreet and Hill did anything, the others accomplished nothing. They did not even prevent reinforcements from going to the Federal centre. It is impossible to deny that General Lee was very poorly served on the occasion by his subordinates. Holmes was so imposed upon by Porters' demonstration that he was not only paralyzed for the day, but continued inactive during the great struggle at Malvern Hill. \* \* \* Magruder, out of the fight, spent the afternoon in marching and countermarching. \* \* \* Huger's feeble operations were the most disappointing of all. He was nearest to Longstreet, and he was almost on the edge of the battlefield, yet he did nothing, \* \* \* nor is it possible to free from blame on this occasion a greater soldier than Holmes or Huger; Jackson, ignorant of the country, had, in the swamp and Franklin's veterans, substantial causes of delay, but they were not such obstacles as usually held Jackson in check. \* \* \* Jackson's comparative inaction was a matter of surprise at the time, and has never been satisfactorily explained."

Remarkable as the admission of Colonel Allan, Jackson's staff officer, that Jackson is really to blame for the failure of a complete victory in the battles around Richmond, equally remarkable is the present admission of another of his staff officers (Rev. Mr. Jones), that Chancellorsville is General Lee's work, not Jackson's. Instead of suggesting the flank movement to General Lee's question, "How can we get at these people?" he replies only, "You know; show me what to do, and I'll do it." When General Lee had explained the movement, he caught it quick enough and executed it with his usual force and vigor. "Such an executive officer the sun never shone on," said General Lee of him; or, as McClellan is said to have expressed it, "Jackson is the best executive officer of the Confederacy, as Lee is its greatest general." Despite of all the balderdash and exaggerated fine writing of General Gordon, Captain Battine has gone too fast and too far ahead, even of Colonel Henderson, in claiming Chancellorsville for General Jackson. The truth is now gradually coming to light. It is becoming clearer and clearer that Chancellorsville was fought, as it was fought, really against Jackson's ideas. He wished to attack Sedgwick—not move on Hooker. Even when in front of Chancellorsville, he thought Hooker would cross the river



and move to support Sedgwick. "General Lee seemed to be the only one who seemed to have the absolute conviction that the real move of the Federal army was the one he was meeting then." Replying to Jackson, finally, "But, general, we must get ready to attack the enemy if we should find him here tomorrow, and you must make all arrangements to move around his right flank." Then, says a bystander, "Jackson's face lighted with a smile, and rising and touching his cap, he said, 'My troops will move at four o'clock.'"

General Lee's own words are in a letter he wrote in reply to an enquiry by Bledsoe, seeking to give Jackson the credit of Chancellorsville, but wise enough to enquire if he was correct: "I have the greatest reluctance to say anything that might be considered as detracting from his (Jackson's) well-deserved fame, for I believe no one was more convinced of his worth or appreciated him more highly than myself; yet your knowledge of military affairs, if you have none of the events themselves, will teach you that this could not have been so. Every movement of an army must be well considered and properly ordered, and every one who knew General Jackson must know that he was too good a soldier to violate this fundamental principle. In the operations around Chancellorsville, I overtook General Jackson, who had been placed in command of the advance as the skirmishers of the approaching armies met, advanced with the troops to the Federal line of defenses, and was on the field until their whole army recrossed the Rappahannock. There is no question as to who was responsible for the operations of the Confederates, or to whom any failure would have been charged."

The writer of General Jackson's life, to exonerate him from the blame of the failure at Ashland and White Oak Swamp to play his allotted part in the battles before Richmond, throws the blame on Lee, as having failed to give Jackson specific orders. I don't suppose that to Longstreet, or Jackson, or Hill, or Stuart, General Lee ever gave iron-clad orders. When Jackson had been informed of the plans of the attack and fully discussed them at Richmond, and knew the time fixed for the movement of the troops, on the left of the enemy, he could not have failed to know that he was to attack at that time, and to cooperate. Yet greater are the misrepresentations which have been made by General Jackson's

admirers as to Chancellorsville. Of a victory, perhaps the greatest won by the Army of Northern Virginia, in the triumph of which Providence, alas, kept him from sharing, everything has been claimed for him. Fortunately so openly that General Lee was compelled, by their own action, to notice the claim. He does this in his usual modest, self-deprecatory way, viz., in a letter to Mrs. Jackson herself of 25th January, 1866, in reply to one from her, I quote from it: "The opinion of General Jackson in reference to the propriety of attacking the Federal Army under General McClellan at Harrison's Landing is not, I think, correctly stated. Upon my arrival there the day after General Longstreet and himself, I was disappointed that no opportunity for striking General McClellan on the retreat, or in his then position, had occurred; and went forward with General Jackson alone on foot, and after a careful reconnoissance of the whole line and position, he certainly stated to me at that time the impropriety of attacking. I am misrepresented at the battle of Chancellorsville in proposing an attack in front, the first evening of our arrival. *On the contrary, I decided against it*, and stated to General Jackson we must attack on our left as soon as practicable, and the necessary movement of troops began immediately." If Lee decided against this, Jackson alone could have proposed it.

This letter of General Lee settles forever, or should settle forever, the claim of General Jackson's friends that he was the author of the celebrated flank movement at Chancellorsville, or that he even suggested it. It is absurd enough to claim that in any battle a subordinate should direct it and have the credit for it. He obeys orders, and General Jackson said often he would obey any officer in command cheerfully, but General Lee he would follow blindfold, and at Chancellorsville, he did obey. But, in fact, Chancellorsville was not fought according to Jackson's suggestion at all. When Sedgwick crossed the Rappahannock and formed his line of battle in front of Fredericksburg, while Hooker crossed the same river some miles above, Jackson urged that Sedgwick should be attacked. General Lee was satisfied that the main attack was to be by Hooker, and that he should attack Hooker, and not wait for his attack. I well remember the occasion, almost every staff officer of Lee had been sent out to observe Sedgwick's movements. The two armies were in line opposite each other, but

both apparently absolutely quiet—so quiet that a deer which was caught between the lines was pursued by the men of both sides. The moment it passed a certain imaginary line the men of one side ceased pursuit, and the opposite side took it up, till the deer was finally caught by the Federals, but not even a picket fired a shot. During the friendly contest not a shot was fired even by a picket.

General Lee was confined to his bed by the disease which finally troubled him so much, the adhesion of the pleura to the side, and Jackson sat by his bedside discussing the situation. Upon Lee's staff reporting General Jackson's views still differing from his, General Lee got up from his bed and rode to a hill, from which most of the ground could be seen. For about an hour, with his glasses, he closely and silently scrutinized the enemy's lines. Then, turning to General Jackson, he remarked: "Our fight must be at Chancellorsville." and by signal ordered General Anderson, then near Chancellorsville with his division, not to bring on a fight, but to hold the enemy without doing this, and ordered McLaws to move to Anderson's aid at once, and ordered General Jackson to move his command before daylight to where Anderson was, near Chancellorsville, and to take command there till he (Lee) should reach the spot; and ordered his general staff to be ready before daylight to report to General Jackson. We were all ready before day, but General Jackson did not pass our quarters till the sun was well up, and his command followed a little later. General Long states that General Jackson passed headquarters at 9 a. m., but it was earlier, according to my recollection. About 9 a. m. General Jackson was upon the battlefield, and was arranging to open the battle with General Anderson's division, before Hill, Colston and Rodes were in line. General Lee, who had quitted his sick bed, learning this, reached the field on a gallop and the attack, by his order, was reduced to a skirmish till Hill and McLaws were in position to join, and then the real attack began, supported by Colston and Rodes in reserve. It is pleasant to mention here an anecdote of a brilliant soldier of the Confederacy, whose life was sacrificed for its sake. Jackson's corps was in three lines: First, Hill; second, Colston, and third, Rodes. Hill being outnumbered and hard pressed called on Colston for support. He replied he had no orders. The gallant, glorious, youthful Alabamian Rodes who, with his men were lying down

behind him, heard this. He sprang up and called his men, "Hill wants help, we'll help him." The men were up in a moment with a Rebel yell, and their charge, with Hill's, drove the enemy back and won the day and the handsome young brigadier his major generalship, for that evening General Lee asked it for him by telegraph. Colston was not heard of again in the Army of Northern Virginia after this battle.

Colonel Henderson, in his life of Stonewall Jackson, evidently writes on papers and memoranda furnished to him by Mrs. Jackson, and is evidently strongly biased by them; still he prints General Lee's letter to Mrs. Jackson correcting some of the Rev. Dr. Dabney's errors. Unfortunately, however, for the truth of history, the book that Colonel Henderson has written is the most important book on the war in Virginia, and is entirely openly partisan for General Jackson. General Lee's book on the war is not yet before the world. So the matter has gone and now, in the last English book on the subject, by Captain Battine, we find this most positive statement: "The fall of the chief who *designed* and *executed* the master stroke in the very hour of victory adds pathos to the story, and appropriately closed his (Jackson's) too brief career of glory. Great as were the moral and material results of the victory, they were bought at all too dear a price, for with the fatal shot which struck down Stonewall Jackson began the series of disastrous events leading to the conquest of the Confederacy." General Jackson, in fact, merely opened the battle of Chancellorsville. It was won the next day, when he had, unfortunately, been wounded and had been carried away from the field.

Doubtless it is true what Captain Battine says of General Jackson; every A. N. Va. man will join him in it most fully: "The possession of such a leader is of priceless value to any State in time of war." But the fact that General Jackson's achievements have been written of by his friends, his widow and chaplain apparently inspiring them, has given, I think, an undue color.

The valley campaign was ordered and conceived by General Johnston. General Johnston told me this himself, and his Memoirs verify it. Jackson executed his orders as only the "best executive officer the sun ever shone on" could execute them it is true. The same, changing the name of Joe Johnston to Lee, is true of his other campaigns, and so, doubtless, when the history of

the Civil War is fully written, General McClellan's opinion will be found the correct one, that "Lee, as a general, was incomparably the first of the Confederates, and Jackson, as an executive officer, without an equal among them."

The judgment of General Early, himself a soldier, and intimately acquainted with both Lee and Jackson, and having served throughout the war in the Army of Northern Virginia, will be accepted above that of Captain Battine.

"As glorious as was this victory (Chancellorsville) it nevertheless shed a gloom over the whole army and country, for in it had fallen the great lieutenant to whom General Lee had always intrusted the execution of his most *daring plans*, and who had proved himself so worthy of the confidence reposed in him. It is not necessary for me to stop here, to delineate the character and talents of General Jackson. As long as unselfish patriotism, Christian devotion, and purity of character, and deeds of heroism shall command the admiration of men, Stonewall Jackson's name and fame will be revered. Of all who mourned his death, none felt more acutely the loss the country and the army has sustained than General Lee. General Jackson had always appreciated and sympathized with the bold conceptions of the commanding general, and entered upon their execution with the most cheerful alacrity and zeal. General Lee never found it necessary to accompany him, to see that his plans were carried out, but could always trust him alone; and well might he say, when Jackson fell, that he had lost his 'right arm.'"

I don't think one need fear much that Captain Battine will change the view of history, which already seems to have put Lee and Jackson in their proper positions—one the natural commander, the other his right hand.

And perhaps, too, if we seek the opinions of English soldiers, that of Colonel Lawler may be nearer the truth than Captain Battine, viz.: "But, after all, the one name, which in connection with the great American Civil War *posterì narratum atque traditum superstes erit*, is the name of Robert Edward Lee"; and Colonel Chesney: "The day will come \* \* \* History will speak with a clear voice \* \* \* and place above all others the name of the great chief of whom we have written (Lee). In strategy, mighty; in battle, terrible; in adversity and in prosperity, a hero indeed;



with the simple devotion to duty and the rare purity of the ideal Christian knight, he joined all the kingly qualities of a leader of men."

"There is a true glory and a true honor: The glory of duty done. The honor of integrity and principle." After Lee's death, an old knapsack which he had used was found with a few bread crumbs and an old slip of dingy paper with these words written on them. This had gone through the war with him—aye, through life.

And so, despite modern seekers after something new, the Confederacy can safely leave the memory of its greatest man, whether citizen or soldier "General R. E. Lee, the most stainless of living commanders, and, except in fortune, the greatest."







MARY CUSTIS LEE; PRESENTED BY MRS. LEE TO  
MRS. JOYNES.

## ADDRESS

## LEE, THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT

BY DR. EDWARD S. JOYNES.

The most glorious object in nature is the sun. Yet in full meridian its brightness dazzles the eye. But sometimes, in the subdued glow of sunset, its magic radiance is revealed in resplendent charm of light and color, more beautiful because less dazzling, than the midday brilliance. So it is sometimes, but rarely, in human character. So it was, notably, with him whose statue guards this capitol—South Carolina's noblest hero and exemplar, Hampton—whose work in the evening of his life, as the great Pacificator, outshines even the glory of his military achievements. So it was, most conspicuously, with Robert E. Lee, who in his latest years, in the humble office of a college president, bearing bravely the burden of daily duty, beneath the weight of a disappointment which might well have crushed the strongest heart, was yet to illustrate and confirm the finest traits of a character whose perfection and power, on the highest fields of action, had already won the admiration of the world.

I am to speak of General Lee as a College President only—not at all of his larger life or achievement in military service. In this humbler capacity it was my privilege to serve him and to know him intimately—a privilege—ah, how great!—so great that I did not realize it until it was gone. Yet, ever since, I look back upon it, with increasing estimate, as the golden age of my life—and with ever increasing regret that I could not know him better and serve him better than I did. Such, I know, was the feeling of all of us who were privileged to serve with him—of whom I am now, with one exception, the sole survivor.\* Today, all over the

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\*The other survivor of the faculty is my class-mate at the University of Virginia (1853), Alexander L. Nelson, Professor of Mathematics for fifty-two years (1854-1906)—now retired on the Carnegie Foundation. Others, since distinguished as teachers or otherwise, were then young instructors, but not members of the faculty. The Rev. Dr. J. William Jones, General Lee's biographer and trusted friend, was one of the chaplains of the College. It would be impossible to enumerate the students of that day who have since attained distinction.

South, in many colleges as elsewhere, this Centennial is fitly celebrated; for General Lee, as a college president, has ennobled every college in the land, and the memory of his great example will be cherished so long as recurring centennials shall come.

In what I shall say to you, my friends, I shall speak without ornament or oratory, but simply, and of intimate personal knowledge. I shall make large use of material written by myself soon after General Lee's death, when recollection was fresher than now.\* Much of documentary evidence, which, though interesting, has already been widely published, I shall omit; and if, on other somewhat technical points, I seem to go too much into detail, my apology must be that, in my opinion, all authentic facts concerning General Lee, as a college president, are of permanent interest and importance.

\* \* \* \* \*

General Lee accepted the presidency of Washington College, in the first place, from a profound and deliberate sense of duty. The same high principle of action that had characterized his conduct in the gravest crises of public affairs marked his decision here; and here, as ever, *duty* alone determined his choice.\* There was absolutely nothing in this position that could have tempted him. Not only was it uncongenial with all the habits of his past life, and remote from all the associations in which he had formerly taken pleasure, but it was at that time most uninviting in itself. The college to which he was called was broken in fortune and in hope. The war had practically closed its doors. Its buildings had been pillaged and defaced, and its library scattered. It had now neither money nor credit, and it was even doubtful whether it would be shortly reopened at all for the reception of students. The faculty were few in number, disorganized and dispirited. Of the slender endowment that had survived the war hardly anything was available, and ready money could not be secured even for the most immediate and pressing wants of the college. Under these circumstances the offer of the presidency to General Lee seemed well-nigh presumptuous; and surely it was an offer from which he had nothing to expect, either of fortune or of fame. The

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\*In December, 1870, for the *University Monthly* (March, 1871).

\*His letter of acceptance, often printed, strikingly illustrates this trait of his character, as well as his modesty and unselfishness.

men, however, who made this election, the trustees of Washington College—ever honored be their memory for their noble conception—had not calculated in vain in their estimate of General Lee's character. They felt that this position, however humble it might seem, would afford to him what from their knowledge of the man they were sure would be the most acceptable to him—a sphere of duty in which he could spend his days in the service of his beloved people; and though the country looked on astonished and incredulous, the result showed that they had not been mistaken.\* Suffice it to say here, that it was a deliberate sense of duty to his fellow-countrymen, and a desire to pay back as far as he could, through their sons, the sufferings and sorrows of his own generation in the South, that determined his decision. He had already fully resolved not to leave Virginia under any circumstances; and this position, humble as it seemed to be, gave him the wished-for opportunity of laboring for her people and for the South. Therefore he accepted it.

The profound sense of duty which marked General Lee's acceptance of this office characterized also his whole administration of it. He entertained the profoundest convictions on the importance of educational influences, both to individuals and to the country, and the deepest sense of personal responsibility in his own office. He felt that an institution like Washington College owed duty not only to its own students but to the whole country, and that its moral obligations were not only supreme within its own sphere, but were attached to the wider interests of public virtue and of true religion among all the people. Everybody around him felt unconsciously that he was actuated by these principles, and all were impressed by his high conceptions of duty and the singleness of his devotion to it. Nothing else, indeed, could have sustained him so serenely through so many and so constant details of labor and of trial. Nothing else could have held his thoughts so high or kept his heart so strong in the midst of daily tasks always so severe, often so trivial and discouraging. But he never flagged; and though he fully comprehended the difficulties of his office, and was often wearied with its incessant labors, no word of

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\*Details of this event—as of many other facts herein referred to—may be found in Jones' "Personal Reminiscences."

despondency fell from his lips. He felt that he was *doing his duty*. "I have," he said, as reported by the Hon. Mr. Hilliard,\* "a self-imposed task which I cannot forsake"; and in this spirit he met all the details of his daily labors, cheerfully to the last. Again and again, during his life at Lexington, were tempting offers urged upon him—offers of large income, with comparative ease and more active and congenial employment; but though he fully appreciated these considerations and was not indifferent to the attractions presented by such offers, he turned from them all with the same reply. He had chosen his post of duty and he clung to it. Year by year the conception of his duty seemed to grow stronger with him; and year by year the college, as its instrument and representative, grew dearer to him. And as gradually the fruits of his labors began to be manifest, and the moral and intellectual results of his influence approved themselves even to his own modest self-estimate, his heart grew only warmer, and his zeal more zealous, in his work. †

His sense of personal duty was also expanded into a warm solicitude for all who were associated with him. To the faculty he was an elder brother, beloved and revered, and full of all tender sympathy.\* To the students he was a father in carefulness, in encouragement, in reproof. Their welfare and their conduct and character as gentlemen were his chief concern; and this solicitude was not limited to their collegiate years, but followed them abroad into life. (He thought it to be the office of a college not merely to educate the intellect, but to make *Christian men*. The moral and religious character of the students was more precious in his eyes even than their intellectual progress, and was made the special object of his constant personal solicitude. In his annual reports to the trustees, which were models of clear and dignified composition, he always dwelt with peculiar emphasis upon these interests; and nothing in the college gratified him more than its marked moral and religious improvement during his administration. To the Rev. Dr. White he said, as affectingly narrated soon after his death by that venerable minister: "I shall be dis-

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\*See Jones' "Personal Reminiscences of Gen. R. E. Lee," p. 146.

†General Lee's treatment of his faculty was not only courteous, but kind and affectionate. My wife reminds me that once, when I was detained at home by sickness, General Lee came every day, through a deep Lexington snow, and climbed the high stairs, to inquire about me and to comfort her.

appointed, sir—I shall fail in the leading object that brought me here—unless these young men all become consistent Christians.” Other expressions, bearing eloquent witness to the same truth, might be quoted; but none could be more eloquent than the steady tenor of his own life, quietly yet constantly devoted to the highest ends of duty and of religion.\*

Such were the principles which actuated General Lee as president of Washington College, and their effects showed themselves in all the details of his administration. In the discipline of the college his moral influence was supreme. A disciplinarian in the ordinary sense of the term, as it is often most unworthily applied, he was not. He was no seeker-out of small offences, no stickler for formal regulations.† In his construction of college rules, and in his dealings with *actions* generally, he was most liberal; but in his estimate of *motives*, and in the requirements of principle and honor, he was exacting to the last degree. Youthful indiscretion found in him the most lenient of judges; but falsehood or meanness had no toleration with him. He looked rather to the principles of good conduct than to mere outward acts. He was most scrupulous in exacting a proper obedience to lawful authority; but he was always the last to condemn, and the most just to hear the truth, even in behalf of the worst offenders. Hence in the use of college punishments he was cautious, forbearing, and lenient; but he was not the less firm in his demands and prompt, when need was, in his measures. His reproof was stern, yet kind, and often melting in its tenderness; and his appeals, always addressed to the noblest motives, were irresistible. The hardest offenders were alike awed by his presence, and moved

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\*Great as was the need of the College for academic buildings, yet the first building erected, under General Lee's direction, was a chapel for worship—the same under which his remains lie hurried—and he never failed there to attend morning prayers or public worship. (Gen. Lee's views on religious training are fully set forth by my colleague, Rev. Dr. Kirkpatrick, in Dr. Jones' "Personal Reminiscences of General Lee.")

†The "honor principle"—which is the pride of Southern colleges—never had a stronger advocate or a better illustration than General Lee. He did not approve of military regulations in college. I have heard him say that military discipline was, unfortunately, necessary in military education, but was, in his opinion, a most unsuitable training for civil life. A still more remarkable expression is recorded by Professor Humphreys, in the memorial number of the *Wake Forest Student*: "He warned me" (Prof. H. was then an instructor in the College) "against inflexible rules adopted beforehand, and suddenly startled me by saying: 'The great mistake of my life was taking a military education.'"



often to tears by his words; and there was no student who did not dread a reproof from General Lee more than every other punishment. In all his official actions, and, indeed, in all his intercourse with the students, he looked to the elevation of the tone of principle and opinion among themselves, as the vital source of good conduct, rather than to the simple repression of vice. His discipline was moral rather than punitive. Hence there were few cases of dismissal or other severe punishment during his administration, and hence, also, the need for such punishments became ever less and less.

The influence of this policy, aided especially by the mighty influence of his personal character, was all-powerful. The elevation of tone and the improvement in conduct were steady and rapid. Immediately after the war the young men of the South were wild and unrestrained, and acts of disorder were frequent; in the latter years of his administration hardly a single case of serious discipline occurred. I doubt, indeed, whether at any other college in the world so many young men could have been found as free from misconduct, or marked by as high a tone of feeling and opinion, as were the students of Washington College during these latter years of General Lee's life. The students felt this and were proud of it; and they were proud of themselves and of their college as representatives of the character and influence of Lee.

Yet not the less was he rigidly exacting of duty and scrupulously attentive to details. By a system of reports, weekly and monthly—almost military in their exactness—which he required of each professor, he made himself acquainted with the standing and progress of every student in every one of his classes\*. These reports he studied carefully and was quick to detect shortcomings. He took care, also, to make himself acquainted with each student personally, to know his studies, his boarding-house, his associations, disposition and habits; and though he never obtruded this knowledge, the students knew that he possessed it and that his interest followed them everywhere. Nor was it a moral influence

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\*An illustration of this careful attention is related by one of my colleagues: On one occasion the delinquency of a student was mentioned in faculty meeting. "Mr. ———," said General Lee, "I do not know him"—and seemed mortified at the omission. On inquiry it was found that the student had recently entered during the absence of General Lee—who at once proceeded to make his acquaintance.



alone that he exerted in the college. He was equally careful of its intellectual interests. Though not personally engaged in teaching, he watched the progress of every class, attended all the examinations and frequently the recitations, and strove constantly to stimulate both professors and students to the highest attainments.† The whole college, in a word, felt his influence as an ever-present motive, and his character was quietly yet irresistibly impressed upon it, not only in the general working of all its departments, but in all the details of each.

Of this influence General Lee, modest as he was, was perfectly aware and, like a prudent ruler, he husbanded it with a wise economy. He preferred to confine his direct interposition to purely personal acts; and rarely, and then only on critical occasions, did he step forward to present himself before the whole body of students in the full dignity of his presidential office. On these occasions, which were always rare and in his later years hardly ever occurred, he would quietly post an address to the students, in which, appealing only to the highest principles of conduct, he sought to dissuade them from threatened evil. These addresses, which the boys designated as his "*General Orders*," were always of immediate efficacy, and no student would have been tolerated by his fellow-students who would have dared to disregard such an appeal from General Lee.\*

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†General Lee never failed to attend every examination, dividing the time among the several classes. Every week he devoted an hour or more to attending recitations. He came when least expected, and his presence was a stimulus to both students and professors—such as I have never since experienced. He would remain 10 or 15 minutes and then pass to another class. His bow, as he entered and left the room, was an impressive lesson in courtesy—that gracious courtesy which now seems to me to have almost departed from the new generation.

\*One of these addresses—on an occasion of threatened peril, when a company of Federal soldiers was encamped at Lexington, ready to take advantage of any disorder—is here appended. The original, copied for Gen. Lee by Mrs. Joynes and by him presented to her, now hangs in my study.

Washington College, 26 Nov., 1866.

The faculty desires to call the attention of the students to the disturbances which occurred in the streets of Lexington on the nights of Friday and Saturday last. They believe that none can contemplate them with pleasure, or can find any reasonable grounds for their justification. These acts are said to have been committed by students of the college with the apparent object of disturbing the peace and quiet of a town whose inhabitants have opened their doors for their reception and accommodation, and who are always ready to administer to their comfort and pleasure.

It requires but little consideration to see the error of conduct which could only have proceeded from thoughtlessness and a want of reflection. The faculty therefore appeal to the honour and self-respect of the students to prevent any similar

General Lee was also most laborious in the duties of his office as a college president. He gave himself wholly to his work. His occupation was constant, almost incessant. He went to his office daily at eight o'clock, and rarely returned home until one or two. During this time he was almost incessantly engaged in college matters, giving his personal attention to the minutest details, and always ready to receive visitors on college business. His office was always open to students or professors, all whose interests received his ready consideration. His correspondence meanwhile was very heavy, yet no letter that called for an answer was ever neglected. It was stated by the editor of a Virginia paper that to a circular letter of general educational interest, addressed by him to a large number of college presidents, General Lee was the only one that replied; yet he was the greatest and perhaps the busiest of them all. In addition to the formal reports, which he always revised and signed himself, his correspondence with the parents and guardians of students was intimate and explicit, on every occasion that required such correspondence. Many of these letters are models of beautiful composition and noble sentiment.\*

These varied duties grew upon him year after year with the expanding interests of the college; and year after year he seemed to become more devoted to them. Again and again did the trustees and faculty seek to lessen his labors; but his carefulness of duty and natural love of work seemed to render it impossible. Equally, he declined donations offered expressly to raise his salary; for the college, he said, needed money more than he did. The writer has heard the remark made that General Lee gave himself to the duties of President of Washington College as though he had never known any other duties or any other ambition; and this was true. He himself wrote to an old and famous comrade in arms, "I am charmed with the duties of civil life."

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occurrence, trusting that their sense of what is due to themselves, their parents and the institution to which they belong, will be more effectual in teaching them what is right and manly than anything they can say.

There is one consideration connected with these disorderly proceedings which the faculty wish to bring to your particular notice; the example of your conduct, and the advantage taken of it by others, to commit outrages for which you have to bear the blame. They therefore exhort you to adopt the only course capable of shielding you from such charges: the effectual prevention of all such occurrences in future.

R. E. LEE, Pres. W. C.

\*Some of these may be found among General Lee's published letters.

It can be truly said that he was wholly absorbed in his work, his noble conception of which made it great, and worthy even of him.

But General Lee was not only earnest and laborious, he was also able, as a college president. He was perfectly master of the situation, and thoroughly wise and skillful in all its duties, of organization and of policy as well as of detail. To this let the results of his administration bear testimony. He found the college practically bankrupt, disorganized, deserted; he left it strong, progressive, and crowded with students. It was not merely numbers that he brought to it, for these his great fame alone would have attracted; he gave it organization, unity, energy, and practical success. In entering upon his presidency he seemed at once fully to comprehend the wants of the college, and its history during the next five years was but the development of his plans and the reflection of his wise energy. And these plans were not fragmentary, nor was this energy merely an industrious zeal. He had from the beginning a distinct policy which he had fully conceived and to which he steadily adhered, so that all his particular measures of progress were but consistent steps in its development. His object was nothing less than to establish and perfect an institution which should meet the highest needs of education in every department. At once, and without waiting for the means to be provided in advance, he proceeded to develop this purpose. Under his advice new chairs were created, and professors called to fill them; so that before the end of the first year the faculty was doubled in numbers. Later, additional chairs were created, and finally a complete system of departments was established and brought into full operation. To these departments, each one of which was complete in itself and under the individual control of its own professor, was given a compact and unique organization into a system of complete courses, with corresponding diplomas and degrees; which, while securing the perfect distinctness and responsibility of each department, gave perfect unity to them all. These courses were so adapted and mutually arranged as to avoid alike the errors of the purely elective system on the one hand and of the close curriculum on the other, and to secure, by a happy compromise, the best advantages of both. So admirably was this plan conceived and administered that, heterogeneous as were the students especially in the earlier years,

each one found at once his proper place, and nearly all were kept in the line of complete and systematic study.

Under this organization, and especially under the inspiration of General Lee's central influence, the utmost harmony and the utmost energy pervaded all the departments of the college. The highest powers of both professors and students were called forth, under the fullest responsibility. The standards of scholarship were rapidly advanced; and soon the graduates of Washington College were the acknowledged equals of those from the best institutions elsewhere, and were eagerly sought after for the highest positions as teachers in the best schools. These results, which even in the few years of his administration had become universally acknowledged throughout the South, were due directly and immediately, more than to all other causes, to the personal ability and influence of General Lee, as president of the college.

General Lee's plans for the development of Washington College were not simply progressive; they were distinct and definite. He aimed to make the college represent at once the wants and the genius of the country. He fully realized the needs of the present age, and he desired to adapt the education of the people to their condition and their destiny. He was the ardent advocate of complete classical and literary culture\*. Under his influence the classical and literary departments of the college were fully sustained. Yet he recognized the fact that material well-being is a condition of all high civilization, and therefore he sought to provide the means for the development of science and for its practical applications. He thought, indeed, that the best antidote to the materialistic tendencies of a purely scientific training was to be found in the liberalizing influences of literary culture, and that scientific and professional schools could best be taught when surrounded by the associations of a literary institution. He believed fully in the *university* idea and not in separate technical schools; but that, as hereafter they must live together, so young men of different pursuits should be educated together, and that their mutual influence would be mutually beneficial in college as in later life. He sought, therefore, to establish this mutual connection, and to consolidate all the departments of literary, scientific

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\*He was often heard to regret that he had not more fully completed his classical education before going to West Point.

and professional education under a common organization. Hence, at an early day, he called into existence the departments of Applied Mathematics and Engineering, of Modern Languages, and of Law, as part of the collegiate organization; and, later, he submitted to the trustees a plan for the complete development of the scientific and professional departments of the college, which will ever remain as an example of his enlarged wisdom, and which anticipated, by many years, the actual attainments of any school in this country.\* In addition to all the other reasons for mourning the death of General Lee, it is to be deeply regretted that he did not live to complete his great designs.\* Had he done so, he

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\*In the Washington College catalogue for 1868-69 (as part of General Lee's report to the Board of Trustees) may be found the outline of a School of Commerce, which now, after nearly forty years, Washington and Lee University (see its last Summer Bulletin) has just been able to realize. A like course was included (I regret to say, unsuccessfully) in the recommendations of our own University to the present Legislature. So did General Lee anticipate the future, and so do his works live after him.

I have elsewhere related how, in my first official interview with him, he emphasized the teaching of Spanish, remarking (prophetically) that our relations with Spanish-speaking countries were destined soon to become closer.

Properly to estimate the value of General Lee's work, as a college president, and especially of the plans left unfulfilled by his death, we must consider the condition of American colleges, generally, in the sixties, and not the more advanced conditions of the present day. And, for a just estimate of his labors, it must be remembered that in those days there were no telephones and no typewriters; and, so far as I can recall, General Lee never had any private secretary.

\*The successive catalogues of Washington College, 1866-70, exhibit an interesting chapter in the history of education, which, it is hoped, Washington and Lee University will some day make public; for they show, in a striking way, the progressiveness and the elevation of General Lee's ideas, beyond anything then realized, or even conceived, in American colleges. Having already established (in the first year) the departments of Applied Mathematics, of Civil Engineering, of Modern Languages and English, and of Law; and, in the second year, of History and English Literature, of Natural History and Geology, of Applied Chemistry and a Students' Business School, General Lee, in the next year (1868-69) recommended an extension of the scientific and practical courses, including: A Course of Agriculture; a Course of Commerce; a Course of Mechanical Engineering; a Course of Mining Engineering, and a Course of Chemistry Applied to the Arts.

In recommending these courses, which are fully set forth in his report to the trustees, and which anticipate the best work of the best schools of the present day, General Lee wrote:

"The great object of the whole plan is to provide the facilities required by the large class of our young men, who, looking to an early entrance into the practical pursuits of life, need a more direct training to this end than the usual literary courses. The proposed departments will also derive great advantage from the literary Schools of the College, whose influence in the cultivation and enlargement of the mind is felt beyond their immediate limits."

The fulfillment of these far-sighted plans was interrupted by his death (October 1870). The money, cheerfully subscribed for his sake all over the South, was no longer available.



would probably have left behind him an institution of learning which would have been a not less illustrious tribute to his fame than his most brilliant military achievements. As it is, he has left a university, which, dowered with his memory and his name, and inspired with his ideals, will always remain his noblest monument. There today his memory has been celebrated, and his praises spoken by a distinguished citizen of Massachusetts, who, once a Union soldier, is now proud to claim the name and fame of Lee as the property and the glory of the nation.

Outside of these more official statements there is much that I might say of General Lee in his more personal and private relations. Yet such detail might be wearisome, and, besides, much of what I would say might be unsuitable for public utterance. But no one who ever enjoyed the privilege of intercourse with General Lee can forget that splendid and captivating personality. He was the handsomest man I have ever seen. Besides the utmost perfection of form and feature he had a mingled sweetness and dignity of expression—an unconscious grace and majesty of appearance—"the like of which," says General Lord Wolseley, "I have never seen in other men." His familiar conversation was kind and gracious, and often lightened by the play of genial humor. He enjoyed a joke and could tell one with a keen zest—but never was there any approach to unseemly levity, and no man could have dared to take liberties with General Lee. In his home, where I often met him in his family circle, he was most loving and lovable—and especially his demeanor to Mrs. Lee, who for some years had been disabled by rheumatism, was marked by a visible and touching tenderness. Of this dear and gracious lady, who to my wife and children showed the mingled love of friend and mother,

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One other paragraph, from the Catalogue of 1867-68, I think worthy of record here:

"The discipline has been placed upon that basis on which it is believed experience has shown it can be most safely trusted—upon the honour and self-respect of the students themselves. The entire government, and the intercourse of the faculty with the students, are adapted to the encouragement of these principles. The cultivation of a high tone of truthfulness and honour, and of a just and lofty public opinion among the students as a body, is believed to furnish a better safeguard for the discipline of the College, as well as a better assurance for the development of manly character, than any repressive or punitive regulations that could be adopted. Strict attention to duty is nevertheless required of all."

and whose memorials are among the dearest possessions of our household, I may not speak here, except to say, that she was worthy to be the wife of General Lee and the mother of his children. Of his devotion to her, and of his affectionate and beautiful family life, the richest proofs are given in his published letters—the most intimate of which exhibit, most unconsciously, the finest traits of his character. To all women he always showed the most chivalrous and delicate courtesy. Of children he was affectionately fond, and to them he was irresistibly attractive. They were often seen gathered around him on the campus, or in his quiet walks.

In what is called "society" General Lee mingled but little—he had neither time nor inclination. But he was never forgetful of the "small, sweet courtesies of life." A stranger visiting Lexington, a father or mother visiting a son at college, was sure of a call from General Lee, and with scrupulous courtesy he repaid the social attentions that he received. At his table he presided with his accustomed sweet and gentle dignity, and shared fully in social, often playful conversation. On special occasions he offered rare wines—I remember once some that had been bottled by his father. Of such he partook sparingly, but never—so far as I know—of any other intoxicating drink. He was fond of riding—almost every afternoon, when he had time; and General Lee on Traveller, booted and gauntleted—in winter with his military cloak—and accompanied, as he often was, by his favorite friend, Professor White—like himself a superb horseman—was the finest sight on which the eye could rest. How often—ah, how often! I have watched that splendid spectacle!

In business matters, private or official, General Lee was accurate and methodical, and his annual reports were models of clear and comprehensive statement. In correspondence he was careful and scrupulously punctual. On this subject I can speak with knowledge, for it often fell to my lot to help him—as we were all ready to do—in answering his many letters. In private conversation he was quiet and genial. He never spoke—at least not in my hearing—of the war or of politics, except with the utmost reserve. Here his recollections were, doubtless, too painful. I never heard from his lips a word either of bitterness or of apology, nor any criticism of others. It is known, I believe, that he had intended to write the



history of his army, but that he desisted, because he thought this could not be done "without causing too much pain." Thus, for the sake of others, he forebore what would have been his own supreme vindication. So tender, so self-denying, was this great heart.

As I look back now, through the haze of forty years, I can hardly realize, as I could not then, that this man, so quiet and so human—so simple in conduct and costume—so kind and friendly—so diligent in business—so social and cheerful—so unassuming and unpretending, as he shared or cheered our daily labors—was the same that had commanded great armies—had swayed the tide of battle—had borne the hopes and sorrows of a great people, and alike in victory and in defeat had given to his countrymen and to the world the last and highest ideal of the heroic commander. And yet—wonderful as it was and is—it was he; and after all, he was as great—as unequaled—on that college campus as on any battlefield—the same everywhere and always. "He was," says General Lord Wolseley, who knew him when at the head of his army, "the most perfect man I have ever met," and seemed "cast in a grander mould and made of finer metal than all other men." It is but small praise that I, who knew him in a narrower and more intimate sphere, should echo the same sentiment.\*

It has been already said that to the individual professors General Lee was always kind and accessible. In official relations he bore his authority modestly, yet always effectively. From each professor he required stated reports of his department, which he then transmitted to the trustees, with his own endorsement or comment, along with his own report. And after submitting his report, he always retired to his office to await the pleasure of the Board, in order not to embarrass their action by his presence.

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\*Since this was written I have, for the first time, read in *The Outlook*, Nov. 26, 1904, a most sympathetic and appreciative paper by Professor Edwin Mims, of Trinity College, N. C., entitled "Five Years of Robert E. Lee's Life," from which I regret that it is now too late to quote. This paper was written in review of "Recollections and Letters of General Lee," by (his son) Capt. Robert E. Lee—which volume, along with the "Personal Reminiscences," by the devoted chaplain, Dr. J. William Jones—offers the richest material for the study of Lee's life and character.

I venture to hope that Trinity College, in its celebration of this Centennial, will reprint Professor Mims's paper entire.

In the weekly meetings of the faculty General Lee exerted rather an influence which seemed unconscious both to himself and to us, than any visible authority. Faculty meetings are apt to be wordy, and sometimes a little excited; but General Lee never showed impatience, and his quiet presence calmed every rising storm. Enough occurred, sometimes, to show that he had both a quick and a strong temper, but never for a moment did he lose self-control or forget either dignity or courtesy. He exerted himself to minimize his own authority, and to leave to each professor the full sense of independence and responsibility. He never made a speech; rarely, indeed, spoke from his chair or attempted by any expression of opinion to influence a pending vote. It need not be added, however, that when General Lee's views were known, they were always decisive, and no really important measure was ever introduced without consultation with him. Besides its exceptionally great ability, his was the best organized and most efficient faculty I have ever served with. Its important work was done (as in Congress) by standing committees, and General Lee was always consulted in every case of importance or difficulty. Thus—though the initiative often came from another source—he was really identified with every important measure.

I have said that General Lee rarely spoke in faculty meetings, but his influence was not the less felt. I have already stated how strongly he advocated and enforced the principle of *honor* in dealing with students, and his aversion to minute regulations. And occasionally he gave utterance to thoughts which I have always remembered and now deem worthy of record. On one occasion a professor cited a certain regulation, to which another replied that it was a dead letter. "Then," said General Lee, "let it be at once repealed. A 'dead letter' inspires disrespect for the whole body of laws; but as long as it stands, it should be enforced." On another occasion a professor appealed to precedent, and added: "We must not respect persons." "I always respect persons," replied General Lee, "and care little for precedent." Again he said: "We must never make a rule that we cannot enforce"; and again, counseling a professor: "Never raise an issue which you are not prepared to maintain at all hazards"; and "Make no needless rules."

As to his views of *discipline*, enough perhaps has been said

already. I may state, however, with reference to an important and often recurring question, that General Lee held *idleness* to be not a negative but a positive vice. "A young man," he said, "is always doing something—if not good, then harm to himself and others"—so that merely persistent idleness was, with him, sufficient cause for dismissal. Another interesting fact was this: In the old college, students had lived in dormitories. Now, General Lee advised all younger students to board and lodge in private families—reserving the dormitories as a special privilege for older students—because, he said, they offered special opportunities of license, while younger boys needed the restraining influences of family life. This view was amply vindicated by results, while thus also the town and the college were drawn into closer fellowship and sympathy. There was no "town and gown" in Lexington.

One incident, personal to myself, is worth relating, for it teaches still, as it taught me, a valuable lesson. I often assisted General Lee in his correspondence—as we all sought to help him when we could. Once he gave me an important letter, which he asked me to answer "with care." I did my best. When I returned it, he read it carefully—then took up his pencil, and said: "Professor, this is very good, but it will be better if we strike out a few adjectives and adverbs"—then, handing it back, he said: "Now, if you will kindly copy it." I found that he had struck out every useless word, leaving the letter, of course, better than it was before. This incident I never forgot;—as a teacher of English I have quoted it again and again to my classes, and I recognize it now as the best lesson in composition I have ever received. In this connection I may remark that General Lee's own writings, whether official or private, are models of clear and correct form. He was a master of style, in both thought and expression.

Of his dealings with students, by which he won their love as well as their reverence, many interesting anecdotes are related—I mention only one or two, which came under my personal knowledge.

I have said that by weekly reports he kept in close touch with all the classes. Especially no single unexcused absence was ever overlooked.\* The delinquent was at once summoned to General

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\*I take the liberty of adding here that, in this respect, General Lee's discipline was a model. His punctuality made it at once strict and easy. By thus meeting neglect and disorder on the threshold, he prevented their continuance; and hence there were but few cases of prolonged misconduct to be dealt with by him or by the faculty.

Lee's office—always a most dreaded ordeal—and his reception varied from “grave to gay” according to circumstances. I give an instance of each: A young fellow whose general record was none too good, was summoned to answer for absence. He stated his excuse, and then, hesitatingly, he added another and another. “Stop, Mr. ——,” said General Lee, “one good reason should be sufficient,” with an emphasis on the word *good* that spoke volumes. Another, an excellent student, now a distinguished lawyer in Tennessee, was once beguiled into an unexcused absence. The dreaded summons came. With his heart in his boots he entered General Lee's office. The General met him smiling: “Mr. M., I am glad to see you are better.” “But, General, I have not been sick.” “Then I am glad to see you had better news from home.” “But, General, I have had no bad news.” “Ah,” said the General, “I took it for granted that nothing less than sickness or distressing news from home could have kept you from your duty.” Mr. M. told me, in relating this incident, that he then felt as if he wished the earth to open and swallow him. To a lazy fellow, he once said: “How is your mother? I am sure you must be devoted to her; you are so careful of the health of her son”; and to another, who was in rebellion against authority: “You cannot be a true man, until you learn to obey.”

Of General Lee's religious character I do not feel myself worthy to speak. That he was deeply, sincerely religious, with a perfect, trusting faith in God and in Christ—that by this he was guided and upborne in every act and every trial—that this he sought, unobtrusively yet earnestly to impress upon his family, his community, his college—as he had done upon his army—this is manifest from all the course of his life, as from his writings. His last afternoon was spent in a vestry meeting—at which I also was present—in the attempt to relieve his beloved rector (formerly his trusted companion in arms); and his last conscious act was, on that same evening, to attempt to ask a blessing upon the evening meal—when God called him, and he sank, unconscious, in his chair. Of the following days of anxious sorrow, of the shock of his death, and of the grief with which we laid him in his coffin and followed him to his grave, I have no heart to speak. There he rests, beneath the chapel which he himself built, to the glory of God—his tomb fitly crowned with that recumbent statue by Valentine, symbol of the Eternal Rest.

Such, most imperfectly sketched, was General Lee, as a college president. And surely this part of his life deserves to be remembered and commemorated by those who hold his memory dear. In it he exhibited all those great qualities of character which had made his name already so illustrious; while, in addition, he sustained trials and sorrows without which the highest perfections of that character could never have been so signally displayed. This life at Washington College, so devoted, so earnest, so laborious, so full of far-reaching plans and of wise and successful effort, was begun under the weight of a disappointment which might have broken any ordinary strength, and was maintained, in the midst of private and public misfortune, with a serene patience and a mingled firmness and sweetness of temper, which give additional brilliancy even to the glory of his former fame. It was his high privilege to meet alike the temptations and perils of the highest stations before the eyes of the world, and the cares and labors of the most responsible duties of private life under the most trying circumstances, and to exhibit, in all alike, the qualities of a great and consistent character, founded in the noblest endowments, and sustained by the loftiest principles of virtue and religion. It is a privilege henceforth for the teachers of our country that their profession, in its humble yet arduous labors, its great and its petty cares, has been illustrated by the devotion of such a man. It is an honor for all our colleges that one of them is henceforth identified with the memory of his name and of his work. It is a boon for us all; an honor to the country, which in its whole length and breadth will soon be proud to claim his fame; an honor to human nature itself, that this great character, so often and so severely tried, has thus proved itself consistent, serene and grand, alike in peace and in war, in the humblest as well as the highest offices. The "Lost Cause," indeed! No cause is wholly lost, to a people or to mankind, that produces such men, and leaves such memories, as Wade Hampton and Robert E. Lee.

Young gentlemen of the University: Would you follow Lee? No more, on the embattled field, can he lead you, as he led your fathers, to glorious victory; but in spirit and in eternal fame he still lives—the Christian soldier, the self-sacrificing patriot, the college president, the South's noblest gentleman—to remind you, by example as by precept, that "Duty is the sublimest word in the language."





GENERAL LEE AND TRAVELLER, BY MILEY, OF  
LEXINGTON. THE SCENE IS ROCK-  
BRIDGE BATHS, VIRGINIA.







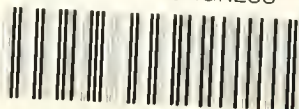








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